AN

ESSAY

ON THE

NATURE AND CONSTITUTION

OF

MAN.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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ON THE

NATURE AND CONSTITUTION

OF

MAN;

COMPREHENDING AN

ANSWER TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTION,

PROPOSED BY

A LEARNED SOCIETY:

"*Are there any ſatisfactory proofs of the Immateri-*
"*ality of the Soul? If ſuch proofs exiſt, what con-*
"*cluſions are to be formed from them with reſpect to*
"*the Soul's duration, ſenſation, and employment, in its*
"*ſtate of ſeparation from the Body?*"

By R. C. SIMS, M.D.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

PREFACE.

HAVING formerly been assailed with arguments to prove, that what we seem to see with the eye, or hear with the ear, are only ideas in the mind thinking of them; and since, with others, in support of the contrary opinion, that men, and all things in the world consist entirely of matter; the author could not be brought to disbelieve his senses; nor to suppose matter, however modified, capable of thinking, feeling, and willing; nor to believe that man was formed upon any plan of deception whatever. When Dr. Priestley's Disquisition on Matter and Spirit was put

into his hands, he began to write his own thoughts on the ſubject; but ſoon grew weary. Yet when he ſaw in the Monthly Review, that Teyler's Theological Society at Haarlem, had propoſed the queſtion recited in the title page of this Eſſay, as their prize queſtion for 1788, he reviewed and arranged his papers for an anſwer, which, with ſome alteration and addition, he now ventures to publiſh from the following motive.

Curioſity, ſo natural to man, prevails eſpecially in youth, who are ever fond of prying into the nature of things. The conſtitution of man, as well as of the world in general, appears a noble theme for the exerciſe of their intellectual powers; and the very name of philoſophy charms. Thus prompted, many eagerly read ſuch books, and liſten to ſuch diſcourſes on theſe ſubjects, as come in their way, without ſuſpicion of danger. Nevertheleſs there are ſeveral philoſophical theories which

which ſtand on mere ſuppoſitions, or on metaphyſical ſpeculations carried beyond the limits of the human faculties; and theſe ought to be read with great caution: for they are not only unfit to promote uſeful knowledge, but have alſo an evident tendency to lead into doubts, uncertainties, and difficulties inextricable. A ſad example of this danger is a late ingenious philoſopher, who went ſo far as to profeſs a delight in uncertainties, to deny that any one propoſition is more probable than its contrary; and to glory in the ſuſpenſe or balance of the mind between two opinions, as the triumph of his philoſophy. To be always in uncertainty, or to think we can know nothing at all, is a miſerable ſtate of mind, and ſo highly prejudicial to every civil, moral, and religious improvement, that it behoves us to guard carefully againſt it, by confining our inquiries to the things which are within the reach of our powers. Indeed nothing can de-

ſerve the name of philoſophy, that is not founded upon a patient obſervation of facts, and chaſte inductions from theſe facts; for where ſuch obſervation fails, knowledge muſt ſtand ſtill. How far the following Eſſay is conformable to this plan, is ſubmitted to the judgment of the publick.

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57, 5. After *creation* put . and for *and*, read *And*

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AN

ESSAY

ON THE

CONSTITUTION OF MAN.

THE nature and conſtitution of Man have engaged attention in every age; and the general belief has ever been, that man is compoſed of a material body, and an immaterial mind, or ſoul, united and forming one living perſon.

Nevertheleſs, this belief has been oppoſed by divers philoſophers, ancient and modern, who contend that all the appearances in man and nature may be accounted for, upon the ſuppoſition of the

whole world being formed of one uniform compoſition; that it is needleſs to have recourſe to two ſuch diſtinct principles, as matter and mind; and that it is impoſſible for theſe principles, which are ſo eſſentially different in their nature, to have any connection with, or mutual operation upon, each other.

Of the different Opinions of Philosophers.

The Philoſophers, who agree in rejecting two diſtinct principles in man, and in admitting only of one uniform compoſition, when they proceed to explain the nature of this uniform compoſition, differ widely in opinion, and ſplit into divers ſects.

The moſt numerous ſect, at preſent, rejecting the exiſtence of mind, contends that

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Of opinions ſo contrary, one only can be true; and, ſince the firſt contradicts the feelings, the ſecond the ſenſes, and the third the underſtandings of men, there is room to ſuſpect all the three to be falſe. To an unprejudiced mind, the appearances in nature do not ſuggeſt that the world is compoſed entirely of matter, or entirely of minds, or entirely of ideas independent of both. Nor do the reaſons aſſigned for the ſuppoſition of an uniform compoſition, appear to be well-founded. For if it be unphiloſophical to admit more cauſes of natural things than is ſufficient to explain them, it is equally ſo to reject any true cauſe, or to aſcribe to any cauſe effects which are not ſhown to be produced by it. And all the operations of nature, and of art, appear to be carried on chiefly by a mutual action of things of a contrary nature upon one another; and it ſeems reaſonable to expect, that an uniform compoſition of any kind ſhould produce a ſimilar

ſimilar uniformity of operations and effects, rather than ſuch a diverſity as occurs in every department of nature and art. That there actually is a connection and mutual operation between the body, and the ſoul that animates it, will, it is hoped, appear when the human economy comes to be explained.

The almoſt univerſal belief, that man conſiſts of a body and a ſoul united, is a proof of the conformity of this doctrine to the common experience, ſenſe, and apprehenſion of mankind; and the appearances in nature are accounted for in a more eaſy, uſeful, and ſcientific manner, upon this opinion, than upon that of any uniform compoſition. Human conduct is naturally governed by opinion. The common belief that man is compoſed of a body and a ſoul, is attended with many beneficial effects, and in all the concerns of life we may act according to it, with the greateſt propriety. But this is ſo far from being the caſe with reſpect to the

three opinions, oppoſed to the common one, that if theſe philoſophers ſuffered their notions to influence their conduct, they could neither live, talk, nor act like reaſonable people.

Nevertheleſs, each of theſe theories has been ſet forth, and accommodated to the appearances in nature, with ſuch ingenuity, as has given it a plauſibility not eaſily to be overthrown by argument. Yet this appearance of equal ſtrength in three contrary opinions, while it exhibits a ſtriking ſpecimen of the vanity of the metaphyſical ſpeculations on which they are founded, proves that there muſt have been ſome error in the inveſtigation, or method of treating them; which ſeems to have been this: Divers learned men of great parts have ariſen at different times, who, deſirous of unfolding the nature of man, but impatient of the ſlow progreſs they could make by careful obſervations and chaſte concluſions drawn from them, and urged by the impetuoſity of genius, have preſumed to

ſubſtitute

ſubſtitute conjectures in their ſtead, and to carry their ſpeculations beyond the reach of human faculties; but theories thus erected are generally equally incapable of direct refutation, or of proof.

Theſe conſiderations determine the author to avoid all deep metaphyſical ſpeculations, as tending rather to bewilder, than to inform the judgment: nor will he aim at mathematical demonſtration; becauſe however beautiful and convincing in its proper province of contemplating things capable of being numbered or meaſured, it ſeems to him inapplicable to the purpoſe of inveſtigating the nature of man. This, he thinks, may be done more ſucceſsfully by confining the inquiry to thoſe ſources of knowledge, which lie open to a common underſtanding; and in this ſober way of philoſophizing he hopes to meet with evidence, on which he may rely with confidence. And, ſince the knowledge of the things which paſs within ourſelves is

common to all men, the following inquiry will be carried on in the firſt perſon, that the reader may more readily compare what is ſaid, with his own experience in each caſe, and judge for himſelf.

The firſt ſtep in the inquiry, is to procure a firm foundation for belief; and ſince the moſt certain of all knowledge is that which a man has of his own exiſtence; let us ſeek out how we come by it.

Of the Knowledge of our own Existence.

I DO now exiſt: this is a truth of which I am moſt certain, however unable I may be to demonſtrate it to another, who may pleaſe to deny it. How comes this certain knowledge into my underſtanding? The proceſs ſeems to be this: whenever I perceive any external object with

with my organs of ſenſe; whenever I feel any bodily or intellectual pleaſure, or pain; whenever I perform any voluntary action, bodily or mental; I have an immediate conception of the operations performed, joined with a belief of the exiſtence of theſe operations, and that I, who perform or ſuffer them, do alſo exiſt at the time. Hence it appears that it is the conſcious exerciſe of our natural faculties, which gives us the knowledge of our own exiſtence: therefore when all ſuch exerciſe ceaſes, as in a ſound ſleep, ſwoon, or apoplexy, this knowledge ceaſes alſo, and returns immediately upon the renewal of the exerciſe, when waking or recovering from the fit; yet the perſon ſo recovered remains ignorant of what paſſed during the ſleep, or fit, and incapable of ever regaining any other knowledge of that part of his exiſtence, than ſuch as he might have of things done before he was born.

The order of the Inquiry.

Having ſeen that the conception and ſure knowledge which we have of our own exiſtence, is received from the conſcious exerciſe of our natural faculties; we proceed to inquire what information can be had from the exerciſe of the ſame faculties, with reſpect to the nature and conſtitution of man: for it is reaſonable to expect, that the evidence given by the ſources of the moſt certain of all human knowledge will be ſatisfactory.

If we conſider the means we have of acquiring knowledge, it will be found, that the conſciouſneſs, or perception, which a man has of what paſſes in his own mind, is the true ſource, not only of the knowledge he has of his own exiſtence, but alſo of all his other knowledge of every kind.

Conſciouſneſs is diſtinguiſhed into two kinds, according to the natural faculties from

from which it ariſes. The firſt, ariſing through the medium of the bodily organs, is uſually named perception; it comprehends the perceptions of ſenſe, and ſenſation; has for its proper objects the ſenſible qualities of external bodies, and the preſent ſtate of a man's own body; and is the ſource of every information we can receive with reſpect to matter, or things external to the mind. The ſecond kind, named conſciouſneſs ſimply, comprehends every conception or operation of the ſoul, ariſing from its own internal acts; whether relative to the underſtanding, the affections, or the will.

This diviſion of the human faculties, and of human knowledge depending on them, is ſo conſonant to common experience, that in all ages, men in general have arranged the objects of their knowledge into three primary claſſes; material beings, the proper objects of ſenſe; immaterial beings, minds, ſpirits, ſouls, which are inſcrutable

inſcrutable by any organ of ſenſe; and animals compounded of a material body, and an immaterial ſoul, united into one living creature.

At the head of the animals of the earth is placed MAN, the nature of whoſe conſtitution is now to be inveſtigated. Order requires that we conſider, firſt, his body and his ſoul apart; then, as they are united in the living man; and laſtly, the ſtate of the ſoul after it is ſeparated from the body by death.

Of the Body of Man, and its materiality.

The human body is a viſible, tangible frame, of a particular figure, magnitude, ſtructure, and conſequently material; ſince the term, matter, is applied to every exiſtence indued with any quality that can become an object of ſenſe.

Of the Senses.

MAN is informed of the things in the world, by means of the organs of ſenſe. If it be aſked, what evidence is there for believing their teſtimony, when they report the preſence and ſenſible qualities of external bodies? While I am walking in a garden, viewing the beauties of the vegetable and animal creation, attending to the voice of the company, gratifying myſelf with the fragrance of the roſe, or the flavour of fruit, my organs of ſenſe are exerciſed; and their reports give me an immediate conception of certain ſenſible qualities, attended with a firm belief, that there exiſt externally certain bodies in which the qualities perceived do reſide, as in their ſubject. The ſenſes, indeed, report only the qualities perceived; but ſince theſe cannot exiſt by themſelves, but muſt be in ſomething elſe, to which they belong as qualities, I, from the perception of theſe qualities, naturally judge and believe

lieve that certain material bodies are preſent, in which they reſide. And thus the reports of the ſenſes give me, without reaſoning, an indubitable evidence that my own and all other bodies, which I ſee with my eyes, hear with my ears, or handle with my hands, are material.

It is true, we know nothing of the nature of the impreſſions made on the organs, nor how the ſeveral impreſſions produce the correſpondent perceptions; yet ſuch is our conſtitution, that we believe every clear perception of the ſenſes naturally, and without reaſoning. No man requires a reaſon for believing what he ſees or feels; and we may obſerve in infants, before they are capable of reaſon or prejudice, plain tokens that they believe ſuch things do exiſt, as mother, breaſt, food; even the immaterialiſt, when out of his cloſet, and engaged in the common concerns of life, appears to place the ſame confidence in the teſtimony of his ſenſes,

ſenſes, as other people. Farther, if the objects of my perceptions of ſenſe were nothing but ideas in my mind, when thinking of them; then ſhould I be in the cheerleſs ſituation of a ſolitary being, who could hold no converſation with any thing elſe than my own thoughts: but I do perceive material bodies, as exiſting externally, and not as ideas in my mind, nor as the operation of any other mind on mine. Nor can I avoid having the perceptions which the objects produce, or make any alteration in them: but when my eyes or ears are cloſed, the perceptions of ſight and ſound inſtantly vaniſh, and as quickly re-appear upon opening theſe organs, unleſs the objects be removed; and thoſe who have the misfortune to be born and continue blind or deaf, never receive the perceptions, or have the conceptions, of colour and ſound like other people. And theſe appearances evince, that the material bodies which excite theſe perceptions have a real exiſtence out of the

the mind, and do not depend upon our thinking of them.

Before we leave the ſenſes, it ſeems neceſſary to conſider the accuſation of thoſe philoſophers, who charge them with great imperfection, and repreſent their reports as dubious, and deſerving to be always ſuſpected of fallacy, until they are confirmed by reaſon.

Perfection and imperfection are relative terms. Every inſtrument which fully anſwers the end for which it was conſtructed, may be juſtly termed perfect. If the grocer does not call his ſcales imperfect, becauſe they will not weigh to a fraction of a grain, like thoſe of a banker or mint-maſter, much leſs ought the organs of ſenſe to be accuſed of imperfection, ſeeing they are formed with great wiſdom, and perform their reſpective offices moſt completely. The eye, indeed, is not formed to diſcover the component particles

ticles of material bodies, nor the ear to hear weak ſounds at a diſtance, nor the organ of ſmelling to follow a friend through a croud, like a ſpaniel: but theſe circumſtances denote only a limitation, not an imperfection, in the powers.

Since the office of the ſenſes is to report the various qualities of material bodies, as they affect the ſenſes, and not to inform us what theſe bodies are in themſelves, they ought to make different reports concerning the ſame objects, whenever the particular circumſtance under which they are examined, cauſes them to make different impreſſions on the organs. Such different reports may be all true: for, (to conſider the inſtance that has been much inſiſted on) when the ſame tower, which at a diſtance appeared ſmall, round, and dim, gradually alters its appearance on a nearer approach, till at laſt it is found to be large, ſquare, and bright; there is no falſe information given

by the eye. The tower, indeed, remains of the ſame real magnitude and figure; but theſe are not properly objects of ſight, but of touch only, and to be aſcertained, muſt be meaſured by ſome known rule. The eye diſtinguiſhes objects by their colours alone, views only the ſurface next to itſelf, but not their thickneſs, and meaſures their viſible or apparent magnitude by the angle they ſubtend at the eye: conſequently the tower muſt vary in its apparent magnitude, according to its diſtance; in its viſible figure, according as the change in the point of view alters the angular diſtances of its ſeveral parts from one another; and in colour, according to the diſtance of the object, and the ſtate of the atmoſphere. Yet in all this diverſity of reports concerning the ſame object, there is no falſity, nor deception; but ſuch a variation as accords with truth, and gives uſeful knowledge.

And

And ſeeing the ſenſes do report the perceptions ſimply, without making any inference, they ſeem indeed incapable of making falſe reports. If they did make falſe reports, we ſhould of neceſſity be often deceived; for we have no faculty that could detect their errors. Reaſon certainly is incapable of detecting them, becauſe it cannot perceive external objects. It can only compare and conſider thoſe perceptions, which the organs of ſenſe have already reported to the underſtanding, and draw concluſions from them: theſe reports muſt be therefore true, before any reaſoning founded thereon can be ſo. So far indeed is reaſon from being able to correct and over-rule the reports of ſenſe, that even thoſe miſtakes, which are commonly called deceptions of ſenſe, will be found, on a fair examination, to ariſe from wrong concluſions raſhly drawn by reaſon from true reports of ſenſe.

For example; if a perſon, not uſed to it, looks ſteadily at the poſt in the middle of a windmill, while the miller is turning it round ſlowly from the left hand to the right, he will apprehend that the poſt is running round its own axis, very faſt, from the right hand to the left; nor will he diſcover his miſtake, until he looks out upon ſome object which he knows to be fixed. In this notable deception, the only fact reported by the eye is, that freſh parts of the poſt are ſeen to come into view from the right hand, and to paſs out on the left, in a quick ſucceſſion: and this report is true. But the obſerver, who is ſtanding ſtill, and does not obſerve that he is carried round with the mill, aſcribes the appearance ſeen, to the motion of the poſt round its own axis; whereas it is really owing to the motion of the whole mill, with himſelf in it, round the immoveable poſt on which it ſtands.

II. OF

II. *Of the Soul, and its Immateriality.*

By the Soul, is meant the living and active principle in man, which animates him with all the bodily and mental powers poſſeſſed by him. This part of the human conſtitution being inſcrutable by any organ of ſenſe, all we can know of its nature, muſt be learned by conſidering thoſe operations of it in ourſelves, of which we are conſcious. Some of theſe operations it performs by means of the bodily organs; others by its own internal powers.

With reſpect to the firſt kind of theſe operations, I find, that whenever I examine material bodies with my organs of ſenſe, I not only perceive their ſenſible qualities, and know them to be ſuch preciſely as I perceive them to be; but at the ſame time I am alſo conſcious, that there is a principle in me which perceives;

and that this principle is of a nature different from that of the objects perceived, or that of the organs through which it perceives. When I feel any pleaſant or unpleaſant ſenſation, I am conſcious of the particular kind and degree of the ſenſation, and of the member in which I feel it; and at the ſame time am conſcious alſo, that the principle in me which feels, is diſtinct, and of a different nature, from the member in which the ſenſation is felt. When I am writing, ſpeaking, or walking, I am conſcious of what I am doing; and naturally judge and believe, that the active principle in me, which cauſes and governs the motions of my hands, tongue, and feet, at its own will, is of a different nature from that of the members it moves. Thus in every perception, ſenſation, and voluntary action, I am conſcious of the operations performed, and of an internal agent, which performs them: and as conſciouſneſs is certain knowledge, I naturally judge and know, without reaſoning,

ſoning, that this agent is diſtinct, and quite of a different nature, from the material frame of the organs by which it acts; and that conſequently it is immaterial.

With reſpect to the internal operations of the ſoul; when I think, remember, arrange, compare, and conſider the perceptions and ſenſations received from my organs; when I judge, reaſon, believe, doubt, or perform any other intellectual operation; when I change my thoughts at will, and direct them to any ſubject, paſt, preſent, or to come, with more or leſs attention, for a ſhort or long time; or turn them from the tranſactions of former times at Jeruſalem or Rome, to things now doing in England or America, and thence in an inſtant to China, without hindrance from the diſtance of time or place; when I receive pleaſant or painful feelings in the exerciſe of my own thoughts, and am thereby moved with various affections, paſſions, or ſtates of

mind, as with love, hope, fear, joy, grief; when I diſtinguiſh truth from falſehood, or beauty from deformity; when I deſire what appears to be good, and avoid what appears to be evil; when I propoſe, chooſe, conſent, refuſe, or contrive means to bring about my own purpoſes; when I govern the motions of my body, and of my mind, at my own will; I find, that in the exerciſe of theſe ſeveral powers of my underſtanding, affections, and will, I am conſcious both of the operations performed, and of an internal agent which performs them; and alſo that theſe various operations do not proceed from ſeveral principles, but are different acts of one and the ſame agent: and from this conſciouſneſs I naturally judge, believe, or know, that this agent is totally different in nature from every organization of brain, through the medium of which alone it acts, while united to the body; and, conſequently, that it is immaterial.

This

This agent is named the SOUL. If we reaſon concerning its nature, it differs from every known exiſtence, by being inſcrutable by any organ of ſenſe; and the above recited perceptive, ſentient, contemplative, affectionate and active powers, diſtinguiſh it from every organization, or other modification of matter, with as much preciſion and clearneſs, as any characters can diſcriminate one claſs of natural beings from another.

Thus I am convinced, beyond a doubt, of the materiality of the body, from the teſtimony of my ſenſes; and of the immateriality of the ſoul, from the teſtimony of conſciouſneſs. Theſe are the ſources of all our knowledge, and their teſtimony is all the evidence we have, or can have, for believing any thing, even our own exiſtence, the moſt certain of all knowledge: and the evidence which they give with reſpect to the materiality of the body, and the immateriality of the ſoul, ſeems to be as intuitive,

intuitive, clear, and irreſiſtible, as it is with reſpect to a man's own exiſtence. Or if the latter ſtrikes him with greater force or vivacity, than either of the two former; the difference, if any, may be fairly attributed to the conception of mere exiſtence being more ſimple, than the conception either of body or of ſoul, the two parts which compoſe the whole man.

Indeed, the knowledge we have, even concerning our own nature, is limited to what is uſeful in life. For, as all we can know of our own, or other bodies, muſt come from the reports of ſenſe, which give no information relative to the internal nature of matter in itſelf, nor of the component particles of bodies; ſo all we can know concerning the ſoul muſt come from the conſcious exerciſe of its powers, which gives no information concerning the internal nature of the ſoul, independent of its operations; nor of the tie that connects it with the body; nor of the mode

mode of the mutual operation of these two principles upon each other. Consequently we must be ignorant of all these things. Nevertheless there seems to be some relation, or fitness for union, between the soul and the body, unknown to us: for although we cannot explain the mode, the creation of the world out of nothing proves it possible for an immaterial being to act upon matter: and the following sketch of the human economy will, it is hoped, be sufficient to prove the fact; that the soul and body, though essentially different in nature, are united, and mutually act upon each other, in every living man.

III. *Of the Body and the Soul, as united in the living Man.*

Every living man consists of a body and a soul united. The body is a most curious frame, organized into brain, nerves, vessels

veſſels containing blood and various other juices, and organs or inſtruments of ſenſe, of motion, of nutrition, and of other animal powers, wonderfully connected and interwoven. The ſoul is the living active principle in man, whoſe life conſiſts in the union of the ſoul with the body; and the diſſolution of this union, is his death. The ſoul is connected with the world, intereſted in its affairs, and made a partaker of its enjoyments and ſufferings, by the mediation of the body: and the intercourſe between the ſoul and the body, is carried on by means of the brain and nerves.

The brain ſeems to be the chief ſeat of the ſoul, or the organ of conſciouſneſs and thought; in which alone it perceives, feels, underſtands, and wills. The nerves may be conſidered as bundles of minute threads of brain, continued from this organ to every part of the body; and terminating either in ſentient extremities, the

the immediate organs of ſenſe and ſenſation; or among moving fibres, the immediate organs of the motions of the body.

The organs of ſenſe are the medium through which the ſoul is informed of the things in the world. Viſion is performed by means of the different coloured rays of light, which proceeding with great velocity from the ſun, candle, or other luminous body, are reflected from every point of viſible objects, and paſſing through the tranſparent humours of the eye, ſtrike upon the ſentient extremities of the optic nerve, expanded over its bottom. Hearing is performed by the intervention of the air, which being agitated by the tremulous motion of ſonorous bodies, enters the ear. In ſmelling, the ſubtle particles exhaled from odoriferous ſubſtances, are in breathing drawn into the noſtrils with the air. In touching and taſting, the ſubſtance examined is applied immediately to the organ. The impreſſion, thus made by an object of ſenſe upon the ſentient extremities

ties of the nerves in the proper organ, is propagated, along the nerves affected, to the brain, and there excites in the ſoul a perception of the ſenſible quality, ſeen, heard, ſmelt, touched, or taſted.

A large portion of nerves are alſo detached to the other ſenſible parts of the body, where, being variouſly affected by the different ſtates of theſe parts, they occaſionally produce certain pleaſant or painful ſenſations, according to the nature of the parts, and the manner in which they are affected by the operations of health, diſeaſe, or applications. By theſe ſenſations the ſoul is informed of the preſent ſtate of the body; and moved with certain natural appetites, tending to the preſervation of the body in health. The chief of theſe appetites are the deſire of breathing, hunger, thirſt, the expulſion of the excretions, ſleep; which ariſe from the preſent ſtate of the lungs, ſtomach, inteſtines, bladder, or brain. They always have relation to the preſent

preſent wants of the body; urge to ſuch actions, or to the purſuit of ſuch objects, as are proper to relieve theſe wants; generally commence on particular occaſions; and are more or leſs urgent, according to the occaſion. Thus reſpiration being an action neceſſary to life, though in ſome degree ſubjected to the will for uſeful purpoſes, is commonly performed with ſuch eaſe, that we are ſcarcely ſenſible, either of the ſenſation or deſire; but if we attempt to hold the breath for a few minutes, the uneaſineſs and conſequent deſire of breathing become ſenſible, urgent, irreſiſtible. Upon theſe ſenſations and appetites a great part of the enjoyments and ſufferings of human life depends. And they are alſo the foundation of inſtinct.

By inſtinct is meant that knowledge which man, as well as other animals, receives naturally from certain ſtates of the body; whereby he is not only led, but alſo

alſo taught how to do many important actions, chiefly ſuch as relate to health and well-being, without the exerciſe of reaſon. A child comes into the world ignorant of every thing in it; but certain ſenſations, then taking place for the firſt time, give him every knowledge neceſſary to his new condition. He breathes, cries, moves his head from ſide to ſide in ſearch of the breaſt, takes the nipple into his mouth, moves his lips and tongue into the proper form, ſucks, and ſwallows the milk; and though theſe are nice and compound operations, as well as altogether new, he performs them well and with eaſe, unaſſiſted by reaſon, experience, or inſtruction. Nor is inſtinct confined to infants: in many caſes it prevails alſo in ripe age. We ſeldom eat, drink, wink, take exerciſe, or lie down to ſleep, merely with a view to health; nor marry purely for the ſake of having children: but we are excited to theſe actions chiefly by the preſent uneaſy ſtate of the organs, to be relieved

relieved by the action; or becauſe we find pleaſure, or ſatisfaction, in doing them. In things that relate to the health and preſervation of the body, inſtinct ſeems a ſtronger principle of action, and a ſafer guide, than reaſon: yet this faculty may, in many caſes, ſuperintend, govern, and even over-rule it, with advantage.

Another portion of the nerves terminates among the moving fibres, the immediate organs of motion, voluntary and involuntary. The voluntary motions are performed by means of thoſe bundles of red moving fibres, called muſcles, which conſtitute the fleſh of the limbs, trunk, and other parts; and are ſubjected to the government of the will, to enable man to purſue the objects which appetite and reaſon recommend; and to avoid ſuch, as theſe faculties repreſent as evil. When the ſoul wills any certain ends to be obtained by moving certain members, this volition acts upon the brain; and the impulſe, being con-

tinued along the proper nerves to their termination among the moving fibres, cauſes an immediate contraction of all thoſe muſcles, whoſe contraction is neceſſary to produce the action willed. And it is worthy of remark, that men who know nothing of the ſtructure and nature of theſe inſtruments of voluntary motion, can uſe them with the ſame eaſe and advantage, as the moſt ſkilful anatomiſts.

The involuntary motions comprehend all thoſe movements and internal operations, which are continually carried on within the body, independent of our will, or knowledge. The chief are the motions of the heart, arteries, and veins, by which the blood is circulated: the worm-like motions of the ſtomach and inteſtines, which are of great uſe in the digeſtion and paſſage of the food: the motion of the abſorbing veſſels; which ariſe from the internal ſurface of the inteſtines, whence they take up the nutritive portion

of

of the digeſted food; and from every cavity and interſtice of the body, and the external ſurface of the ſkin, whence they receive a clear lymph: theſe abſorbing veſſels are extremely minute and numerous at their origins, but ſoon uniting form larger and larger veſſels, which have frequent communications, and at length carry both theſe fluids into one common receptacle: from which they are ſlowly poured into a large vein under the left collar-bone, to ſupply the blood with a conſtant recruit of nouriſhing and diluting fluids. Theſe internal motions being immediately neceſſary to life, and to be performed without ceaſing, are not entruſted to the will and reaſon of man. They conſiſt of frequent alternate contractions and relaxations of the moving fibres in the coats of theſe veſſels, excited to action by the gentle irritation of their contents, which are thereby agitated and puſhed forwards. Thus the influence of the brain and nerves, or

rather of the ſoul, which acts in them, is conveyed ſo ſilently into theſe organs, that we are not conſcious either of the irritation, or of the motions produced thereby; unleſs they become unnaturally violent, or remiſs.

Laſtly, the ſoul of man appears to exerciſe all its intellectual, affectionate, and active powers in the brain, in a way that is far beyond human comprehenſion. Yet every obſervation concurs in declaring that the brain is the chief ſeat of the union of the ſoul with the body, and the proper organ of conſciouſneſs, thought, and voluntary action, of every kind, as long as the union of the ſoul with the body continues.

The foregoing brief ſketch of the human economy may be ſufficient to ſhow, that the whole is carried on by the union of the ſoul with the body, and the operation of theſe two different principles on each other.

And

And we are now to inquire what becomes of the ſoul after the death of the man.

IV. *Of the Soul in its state of separation from the Body.*

Of Death.

The human body is liable to be put out of order by diſeaſes ariſing in itſelf, as well as by age and by cauſes acting on it from without; and when any ſuch cauſe affects the brain, heart, or lungs, to ſuch a degree, as to render them utterly incapable of performing their offices, the powers of life ceaſe, an end is put to the intercourſe between the ſoul and the body, and the man dies. Such however is the love or inclination of the ſoul towards the body, that it ſeldom breaks off its connection therewith wantonly, or of its own accord; nor does it ſeem to have power ſo to do,

in any other way than by commanding the organs of voluntary motion to do ſome action, that ſhall bring fatal miſchief upon the vital organs.

When the body is deprived of life, it loſes its beauty, and ſoon undergoes a putrefactive fermentation, by which it is gradually reſolved into its component elements.

Of the Nature of the Soul.

Every attempt to explain the ſtate of the human ſoul, after the diſſolution of the body, is attended with many and great difficulties. It is neceſſary in the firſt place to conſider what may be known with reſpect to its nature. The ſoul is that part of the conſtitution of man, in which his powers of life, as well as thoſe of his underſtanding, affection, and will, do

do reſide. Little objection can lie againſt the name, as uſed to diſtinguiſh this part of his conſtitution from the others: the diſputes are about its nature.

Since the ſoul is inviſible, intangible, and inſcrutable by any organ of ſenſe, all we can know of it, muſt come from our conſciouſneſs of what paſſes within ourſelves. But we are conſcious only of ſome of its operations; and the conſciouſneſs we have of theſe gives no information at all, with reſpect to the internal nature and conſtitution of the ſoul itſelf, or of the mode of its operation: therefore we have no means of examining this nobleſt part of man by itſelf. Nevertheleſs, ſince we can obſerve many ſenſible effects, which thoſe operations of it of which we are conſcious, produce in our own minds and frame, and can compare with theſe the ſigns of ſimilar operations and effects, that appear in the words, countenances and actions of other people; we may thus obtain a

very limited, not unimportant knowledge of the ſoul. By ſuch obſervations, we know that all the life and activity of the body, and all the exerted powers of the human underſtanding, affection, and will, are effects produced by the operations of the ſoul; and theſe effects afford a ſatisfactory proof, that the ſoul is, from its very nature, a living and active being, altogether different from matter, and from every organization, modification, or motion of matter.

THE IMMATERIALITY OF THE SOUL DEFENDED.

THAT we have the ſame evidence for a firm belief of the exiſtence and immateriality of the ſoul, as we have for believing our own exiſtence, has been proved already (p. 21 to 27): and the effects of the union of the active

ſoul

ſoul with the human brain have been explained (p. 27 to 37). To which may be added, that the univerſal prevalence, among people of all nations and ages of the world, of the notion of ſpirits and diſembodied ſouls, denotes ſuch notion to be agreeable to the common apprehenſion of mankind.

Againſt theſe proofs of the immateriality of the ſoul, the materialiſts object, that ſince there is a neceſſary connection between the brain, and a man's ability to perform the mental operations, it is more philoſophical to aſcribe theſe operations to the peculiar organization of the brain, than to an immaterial ſoul united to it in an inexplicable manner. And they ſay this opinion is confirmed by the obſervation, that whenever this organ is rendered incapable of performing its office, as in a ſwoon, the perſon is unable to perform any of the mental operations.

It

It is granted that the ſoul, while united with the body, acts only by the mediation of the brain; and therefore when this organ is greatly diſordered, the mental operations are deranged, or ſuſpended. Theſe circumſtances, however, neither prove, nor denote, theſe operations to be the mere effects of the peculiar organization of the brain: and it is far more agreeable to common apprehenſion and reaſon, to aſcribe them to the active nature of the living ſoul, exerted in the brain. The recovery out of a ſwoon, or from a drowning, is a proof not only that an unfit condition of the brain renders a man unconſcious, but alſo that the ſoul may be preſent in the body, while the perſon ceaſes to be conſcious, and may ſtill preſerve an internal energy under a total ceſſation of all its perceptible operations.

It is trifling to require an inſtance of the ſoul's acting independent of the brain; or an explication of the mode of union between

between the ſoul and the brain; ſince the materialiſts do not profeſs to have any conception of the manner in which the mental operations can ariſe from organization of brain, nor how unconſcious inactive matter can become a thinking, feeling, intelligent, and active being; nor how the brain, an aſſemblage of many ſeparable parts, can be the ſubject of individual conſciouſneſs.

Perhaps the ſubject may be a little illuſtrated by comparing the mental powers of man with the projectile powers of a bow. As the projectile operations of the bow depend upon the elaſtic nature of the yew or ſteel of which it is made, as connected with its ſtring; ſo the mental operations of man depend upon the active power of the ſoul, as connected with his brain. The fit condition of the brain, like the fit ſtringing of the bow, is the efficient cauſe, without which the powers cannot be exerted; and the unfit condition of

of the brain, like unſtringing the bow, ſuſpends every operation of the mental powers.

Upon the whole, therefore, it is ſafely concluded, that the ſoul is, from its very nature, a living and active being, immaterial, and altogether different from organization of brain.

Of the Immortality of the Soul, deduced from the consideration of its Nature.

Those who hold the ſoul to be material, and all the mental operations to be nothing more than the natural reſult of the peculiar organization of the brain and nerves, aſſert, that on the diſſolution of this organization by death, the whole man becomes extinct, until he be raiſed again by the ſame power that created him at firſt.

firſt. But I do not ſee how ſuch a reſurrection can differ from a freſh creation, which would deſtroy his identity, reſponſibility, and individual intereſt in the doctrine of a future ſtate.

Againſt the immortality of the ſoul it has been objected, that whatever has begun to exiſt, may ceaſe to exiſt. Certainly the exiſtence of every being depends upon the will of the Creator, who gave to each that nature and thoſe properties which ſeemed good to him. But we find no traces of annihilation in any department of nature. Vegetable and animal bodies, which are the moſt periſhable parts of the terreſtrial creation, grow, die, decay, and are ſoon reſolved into their elementary particles; and theſe by a freſh arrangement, may be again employed, as the component parts of other vegetables and animals. In all theſe changes there is no annihilation of parts, but only a new arrangement of them: there is therefore

no

no reaſon to ſuppoſe that the ſoul of man will ceaſe to exiſt, or be deprived of its nature, upon the diſſolution of the body. For the being which is continually receiving ſuch a variety of different impreſſions, not only from the ſenſes, and the preſent ſtate of the body, but alſo from its own thoughts and affections, and attends to ſo many different objects without confuſion, cannot be compoſed of ſeparable parts; but muſt be of a ſpiritual nature. It is one, ſimple, individual, uncompounded, conſcious being: and conſequently having nothing in itſelf that can occaſion diſſolution, or be liable to corruption by cauſes out of itſelf, is naturally incapable of diſſolution, or death. He only who gave it exiſtence, can make it ceaſe to exiſt: and we have no reaſon to think he will ever do ſo.

This nobleſt part of the conſtitution of man, which animates his body with all the powers of life, and is the efficient cauſe

cauſe of all his bodily and mental operations, and which often reſtores the powers of life to perſons, who appear to be dead; cannot be dependent upon the bodily frame for its exiſtence. It is in itſelf a principle of life, or poſſeſſes life in itſelf, and will continue to live after its ſeparation from the body.

Of the Immortality of the Soul, deduced from the general belief and expectation of Mankind.

Independent, however, of any philoſophical concluſions, men are aſſured that they ſhall continue to live after their death, as to this life, in a way more level to every underſtanding, and therefore more uſeful and fit to produce conviction, from natural, moral, and religious conſiderations.

The

The thought, that a man's death is the utter extinction of his being, or even of his ſenſitive, intellectual, affectionate, and active exiſtence, is too repugnant and irkſome to human nature, to be entertained even by the moſt ſavage people. The belief, as well as the deſire, of living after death in ſome way or other, is ſo natural and common to the whole human race, that they every where look forwards to this future ſtate of exiſtence, with ſome degree of hope and fear. Therefore, ſince no general apprehenſion, or deſire, is found implanted in the human mind, without having its proper object, this univerſal concurrence in the belief and hope of a future exiſtence, may be reaſonably, taken as an intimation given by the Creator, that they ſhall continue to live after the preſent life is finiſhed. And if it be believed, that the ſoul ſurvives the death of the body; there is no reaſon to believe it will die in any ſucceeding time.

Of the Souls of Brute Animals.

Many philoſophers have conſidered the intellectual ſoul of man, as ſuperadded to his animal nature; and therefore free to enjoy a ſeparate exiſtence, without ſuppoſing the lower animals capable of the ſame privilege. Theſe may object, that the foregoing account, by aſcribing the vital and ſenſitive powers of man to the activity of his ſoul, tacitly admits that the ſouls of the lower animals, ſince they poſſeſs theſe powers in common with man, are alſo immaterial, and conſequently immortal.

But reflecting on what paſſes within me, I have no perception of having two diſtinct ſouls; the one rational, the other animal: but I conceive that the ſoul which exerciſes intellectual powers in the brain, is the very ſame which ſees with the eye, hears with the ear, governs the moving

members, and animates the vital organs with the powers of life. Therefore, ſince my ſenſes inform me, that the lower animals are furniſhed, not only with organs of life, ſenſe, and motion, by the uſe of which they give unequivocal ſigns of being endued with perception, feeling, and voluntary action; but alſo with ſome degree of underſtanding and affection to guide their will and actions; I muſt admit that they have alſo a ſoul, or immaterial principle of activity.

Some philoſophers, to avoid this ſuppoſition, which they deem derogatory from the dignity of man, have looked upon the lower animals as mere machines, deſtitute of the powers of perception, ſenſation, affection, or voluntary action; yet ſo curiouſly formed, that the ſimple impreſſion of light, ſound, and other external agents, upon their organs, produce in them that courſe of actions, which is commonly imputed to a ſoul. But this opinion

opinion is repugnant to appearances, and to our natural apprehenſions. When we cut, ſlice, and tear to pieces, the curiouſly organized fruit of a cucumber, or the leaves of a lettuce, we have no ſuch ſympathetic pity, as we feel for a dog or a horſe, treated with cruelty. This argues a belief, that theſe animals have a feeling ſoul: nor is this a new opinion. The moſt ancient writer extant enumerates beaſts, birds, and reptiles, as creatures having a ſoul. The prerogative of man over the lower animals is more effectually vindicated, by living up to the greater dignity of his nature, than by denying them to have what they appear to poſſeſs.

My conceptions with reſpect to the animal creation, are, Firſt, That the ſeveral kinds and ſpecies of quadrupeds, birds, fiſhes, ſerpents, inſects, and worms, which inhabit the earth, repleniſh the waters, and fly in the air, are allied to one another, and even to man their chief,

by having one common conſtitution; an organized body, and an active ſoul, united into one living creature.

2. That ſince they are diſtinguiſhed into their ſeveral ſpecies by different modifications in the form, ſize, colour, and clothing of their bodies; and exhibit an equal diverſity in their ſenſes, appetites, affections, manners, purſuits and modes of life; it ſeems reaſonable to conclude, that there is as great a difference in the ſouls, as in the bodies, of the different animals.

3. It may, perhaps, be alſo preſumed, that there are as many diſtinct kinds of ſouls, as of animals, in the world: and that each ſpecies of animals has a body and a ſoul, nicely adapted to each other, and to its peculiar mode of exiſtence.

4. Animals are the only terreſtrial creatures, that are capable of enjoying pleaſure, and of ſuffering pain; and furniſhed with

with organs and deſires to ſeek the one and avoid the other; and their ſeveral kinds may be conſidered as ſo many ſuits of different labourers, created for, and conſtantly employed in, the natural adminiſtration of the earth; in which work each kind has a proper office and place aſſigned to it.

5. The main buſineſs of life, in all animals, is the purſuit of pleaſant objects, and the avoiding of ſuch as give pain: and in the exerciſe of thoſe active powers, which their ſenſes, feelings, inſtincts, and underſtanding, prompt them to exert for theſe purpoſes, they moſt effectually anſwer the ends of their creation. Thus labouring for themſelves with unremitting diligence, they promote the public ſervice; and in ſo doing find every pleaſure and enjoyment, of which their nature is capable. This order is an aſtoniſhing inſtance of the goodneſs, as well as of the wiſdom and power, of the Creator.

6. Each ſpecies of the other animals ſeems brought into exiſtence, for the ſake of doing its proper office in the natural adminiſtration of the earth; and for this purpoſe to have received a certain fixed and determinate choice of purſuits, which the individuals follow invariably, having the ſame deſires, purſuing the ſame objects, and doing the ſame actions, as others of the ſame ſpecies and ſex. But man is placed at their head, to ſuperintend, regulate, and govern them; and to maintain the whole earth in a beautiful, wholeſome, and uſeful ſtate: and for his natural reward for this ſervice, he receives every emolument and pleaſure, that ariſes from his care, ſkill, and labour.

7. The actions and manners of the lower animals, when contraſted with thoſe of man, clearly evince the great inferiority of their intellectual powers; which although fully ſufficient to guide them in the work they have to do in their ſeveral modes

modes of exiſtence, appear to be confined to the immediate objects of their ſenſes and ſenſations; and therefore altogether incapable of directing their actions by rational, moral, or religious conſiderations. Conſequently the brute animals have no conception of a future life, and are not proper objects of reward and puniſhment in it. If it be aſked, What then becomes of the brutal ſoul after the death of the animal? Does it periſh with the body, as many ſuppoſe from obſerving, that all the actions of brutes tend only to the care of the body? or what uſe can there be for ſuch inferior ſouls in the other world? We cannot anſwer theſe queſtions, becauſe we have no means of making theſe things become the objects of our knowledge.

Of the Superiority of Man over other Animals.

The vaſt capacity and ſtrength of the human intellectual powers, which ſurpaſs that of the moſt ſagacious brute to a ſuperlative degree; the uſe of articulate language, by which each perceives the ſentiments of others, and makes his own known to them, with greater preciſion than could be done by any natural expreſſion in countenance or geſture; the ſurpriſing variety of genius, taſte, and character among mankind, which is ſuch, that inſtead of being tied down to ſome determinate ſet of actions, like other animals, each individual has choice of purſuits, and a way of thinking and acting, peculiar to himſelf; a reſtleſs curioſity, carrying the attention to all ſorts of objects; and the high ſtyle of his ſociety and polity, by which all his powers are called into action, and many can unite their labours to accompliſh the ſame end; conſtitute

ſtitute man lord of the earth. And this ſuperiority, variety, and verſatility of the human faculties, qualify and excite man to adminiſter his dominion over the terreſtrial creation; and to enable him to exerciſe this government with prudence, propriety, and a good conſcience, becoming an accountable governor. He alone, of all the inhabitants of the earth, is endued with an inward ſenſe of right and wrong, in thought and conduct, towards the lower animals, himſelf, other men, and the Creator of all things; connected with the belief of a future life of rewards and puniſhments for deeds done in this.

We are now to conſider,

THE STATE, FEELINGS, AND EMPLOYMENTS OF THE DISEMBODIED HUMAN SOUL.

THE mode of exiſtence, feelings, and employments of the diſembodied ſoul, are ſo remote from obſervation, that the inveſtigation

veſtigation of them lies at the utmoſt verge of human knowledge; and the greateſt care is required, leſt, led by curioſity, we ſhould wander beyond the bounds of information, into devious paths of conjecture and uncertainty.

The little knowledge we can have of the ſtate of the diſembodied ſoul, muſt be deduced from conſideration of the operations of the ſoul in the living man, and the general belief of mankind with reſpect to morality and religion.

V. *Of the state of the disembodied Soul, as deducible from the operations of the Soul in the living Man.*

We are conſcious of many operations of our own ſouls, and this conſciouſneſs is the foundation of all our knowledge in relation to other ſouls. For as a man knows nothing of his own ſoul, but from the operations of it which he obſerves in himſelf;

himſelf; ſo he has no other means to acquire the knowledge of the operations of the ſoul in other men, but the conſideration of ſuch ſenſible effects apparent in their frame, actions, or ſpeech, as are ſimilar to thoſe which he has experienced to be produced in himſelf by the operations of his own ſoul. Therefore, ſince no ſuch effects of the ſoul ever appear in the deceaſed, we have no means of holding any intercourſe with them: neither have we any natural faculty, by which we may come to the knowledge of the future life, as we may of things paſt by memory, and of things preſent by the ſenſes and conſciouſneſs. The gulph of ignorance, which thus ſeparates the dead from the living, is ſo extenſive, that we have no poſſible means of deriving knowledge from the dead. Even perſons recovered from a ſwoon, or drowning, cannot tell what happened to them during the fit, or apparent death.

Of its Nature and Mode of Existence.

ALTHOUGH the preciſe mode of the exiſtence of the diſembodied ſoul be unknown; yet the conſideration of the nature and activity of the ſoul, gives good reaſon to believe its future exiſtence will not be merely ſimple duration, like that of a bar of gold; nor a life of inactivity, like that of a perſon in a deep ſleep; but that it will continue after its ſeparation from the body, a living, conſcious, active being; and retain its eſſential powers of perception, feeling, underſtanding, and willing. Nay, ſince the ſoul of a living man is found to be limited in its operations by the preſent ſtate of the brain, many have conſidered its union with the body, as a general limitation of its powers; and have ſuppoſed, that when this limitation is removed by death, the diſembodied ſoul will be ſuſceptible of a higher degree of perfection in the exerciſe of its powers.

Of its Body.

MANY believe, that the ſame body which periſhes at death, will be raiſed again, and have its own ſoul re-united to it. But it muſt be confeſſed, that neither the appearances at death, nor any other natural obſervation, ſuggeſt, that the diſembodied ſoul will ever re-animate the ſame body, from which it was ſeparated; or be again clothed with a material frame, like its former. Nevertheleſs, ſince infinite ſpace and duration belong only to God, the diſembodied ſoul muſt exiſt in ſome place, as well as time; and conſequently have ſomething in its nature that gives it a relation to ſome place and time. This ſomething is unknown to us, as is alſo the nature of the ſoul itſelf: yet it may perhaps with propriety be called the ſoul's body, however ſpiritual its nature.

Of its Employments and Feelings.

With reſpect to the employments and feelings of the diſembodied ſoul; let it be remembered, that man, who is formed to inhabit and govern the earth, has ſuch a relation to material objects, that he can neither receive, nor communicate knowledge, or ſenſation, nor make any voluntary motion, but by the mediation of his bodily organs. Therefore, ſince the ſoul, when ſeparated from the body by death, is deprived of all corporeal organs, it muſt then have a mode of exiſtence, faculties, and affections, very different, both in kind and degree, from what it had while united with the body: and its employments muſt alſo be as different from human occupations. But as we can form no conception of theſe things, different from thoſe we perceive and feel in ourſelves, the knowledge we can obtain of them will be very little and imperfect.

Some

Some philoſophers have pleaſed themſelves with the thought of being employed in the next life, in contemplating the wonderful works of God, in the creation and preſervation of the univerſe; and the mathematical laws, by which the motions of the vaſt revolving bodies, in the ſeveral ſyſtems in it, are regulated. But they have not ſufficiently conſidered that we have no conception of any other means of ſurveying material bodies, beſides the organs of ſenſe which periſh at death; and do not know that ſuch employment can be ſuitable to diſembodied ſouls.

Another opinion, more general, becauſe more agreeable to the common apprehenſion of mankind, and therefore more probable, is; that ſince we are ſocial beings on earth, and the greater part of the enjoyments of human life flow from love, friendſhip, mutual kindneſs, and other ſocial affections; we ſhall be ſocial alſo in the next life, and take delight in the company of other

other ſouls. It is natural for a man, who has loſt a dear wife, child, or friend, to deſire and expect, when he himſelf ſhall be called into the other world, to meet and converſe with the deceaſed, and to know one another. Yet this ſubject ſeems incapable of a ſatisfactory determination. Perhaps, ſince the bonds of love and ſociety amongſt men, do all ariſe from bodily perceptions and ſenſations, to which an end is put by death; it may appear as probable, that theſe affections will be diſſolved, and another bond of union and ſociety commence, upon a foundation more ſuitable to diſembodied ſouls, than any relation to their former perſons, kindred, or friendſhips.

Thus we ſee that ſuch difficulties occur in contemplating the ſtate, feelings, and employments of the ſoul after its ſeparation from the body, as evince theſe ſubjects to be inſcrutable by a philoſophical inveſtigation of the nature of the ſoul, while

while it is united to the body in the living man. But ſince men are formed to be governed, in the moſt effectual manner, by the hopes and fears of a life to come, it remains to conſider, whether all that is neceſſary for us to know, may not be learned from the doctrines of morality and religion.

VI. *Of the State of the Disembodied Soul, as deducible from the Univerſal Principles of Morality and Religion.*

Wonderful is the diverſity of manners and religion, which have been eſtabliſhed among men in the different nations and ages of the world. We are not, therefore, to ſeek information, relative to the ſtate of the diſembodied ſoul, from any opinions that are particular, or peculiar, to any people; but to confine the inquiry to ſuch as are univerſal, and common to all.

Men are ſocial, moral, and religious beings. Born and educated in different relations and bonds of ſociety, natural, civil and religious; in which the good of the whole requires there ſhould be a diverſity of condition, ſubordination of ranks, a multiplicity of occupations, and a diſtinction of property; they find themſelves to ſtand in continual need of the mutual aſſiſtance and benevolence of one another. From this diverſity of ſituation there ariſes a variety of civil and religious offices and duties, which vary in different perſons, according to the difference of their ſtations. And it has pleaſed the Creator to place every individual in a capacity of knowing, and doing, his reſpective duties in every ſtation and circumſtance of life, by implanting in man the noble internal principle of Conſcience.

Of Conscience.

Conscience is that knowledge, or power of the understanding, by which a man judges of the right or wrong, in the conduct of his own thoughts, words and actions; or of the truth or falsity of any doctrine proposed to him. Conscience is the characteristic and noblest part of the constitution of the human soul; and its secret judgment is the law or rule for the well-ordering of life, which every man is bound to obey. Nevertheless, he ought always to remember, that his conscience is liable to be misinformed, lulled asleep, or perverted; that it must be rightly informed, before it can be qualified to pass a proper judgment on things; and that it is his duty, and highest interest, to watch with care, to keep it always tender and open to information, as well as to act according to its dictates. Its sources of information are two: the one human, the other divine.

THE HUMAN SOURCE, is human reaſon. Connected in ſociety with other perſons in various relations, man perceives ſeveral duties of life, and offices of induſtry and benevolence, which he ought to practiſe. The works of the creation, viſible in the heavens, the earth, and the waters, ſuggeſt to him the exiſtence, power, wiſdom, and goodneſs of the Creator, and his providence in ſupporting them, and confirm the natural expectation he has of a life of retribution to come; he perceives certain things in his thoughts, words, and actions to be right, and others to be wrong; feels himſelf to have ſome power over his own conduct, and the determinations of his will; and conſequently knows, that he is a free and moral agent, accountable to other men, and alſo to his Creator. Upon this rational foundation many elegant ſyſtems of morality, and even of religion, have been framed, containing uſeful rules for proper conduct in the ſeveral ſtations, offices and duties of life.

Nevertheleſs,

Nevertheleſs, the concluſions of reaſon, however beautiful and uſeful in their proper places, are altogether inſufficient for the ſole guide of conſcience: for education and cuſtom have great influence on the concluſions of reaſon, and on the conſcience that is guided by them. Hence the ſeveral people of Europe, Aſia, Africa, and America, all approve of the cuſtoms, manners, and religious doctrines and practices, in which they are brought up: and we find even among the moſt poliſhed and enlightened nations, that reaſon is often employed to pervert, or lull conſcience aſleep, by finding excuſes to juſtify what the allurements of pleaſure, impetuoſity of paſſion, intereſt, or bad example, give men an inclination to do. Morality, therefore, will always need the ſupport of the religious principle. For every precept which ſtands on mere human reaſon alone, can have only human authority; and its ſanction can be no more than the approbation, or diſapprobation, of himſelf, and other fallible men, eſpecially thoſe of the ſame ſociety.

Now ſuch morality and religion can give no other information, reſpecting the ſtate of the ſoul after its ſeparation from the body, than that of philoſophical inveſtigation; and this has already been noticed.

THE DIVINE SOURCE of information, is the holy ſpirit, word, or law of God, manifeſted in the heart or conſcience of man. God, who is preſent in every place, and in every creature according to its nature, has not only formed man with a ſtrength of underſtanding and reaſoning powers, far ſurpaſſing thoſe of any other animal, and with a capacity of receiving the holy ſpirit; but has alſo been graciouſly pleaſed to place in his heart, or conſcience, a meaſure or manifeſtation thereof; and this meaſure, if duly attended to and obeyed, is ſufficient to enlighten his reaſon, to regulate his diſorderly deſires, and to teach him what he ought to do, or to leave undone. This divine monitor is not a part of the

the human conſtitution; but is the grace, or free gift, of God, given to each individual for his inſtructor and guide through life. I can exerciſe my reaſon, when and how I pleaſe; but I have no power at all over this divine gift, to procure its aid, or to prevent its reproofs for evil. My reaſon is fallible, and too apt to miſinform and miſguide my conſcience: but the divine gift is neither fallible, nor liable to miſ-information, or perverſion. I find myſelf naturally prone to evil: but the divine gift reproves for evil, and never conſents to it, but always leads into holineſs; and by theſe properties it is clearly diſtinguiſhed from the concluſions of human reaſon.

Of the universal principle of Religion.

This divine gift in the heart, is alſo the root or principle on which all real religion is founded. Our common Creator, who is equal in all his ways, and no reſpecter of

perſons, has graciouſly beſtowed upon every individual of the human race, wherever ſcattered upon the face of the earth, a meaſure of this divine gift. A ſteady belief in this gift, and a faithful obedience to its dictates, are ſufficient, under every diſpenſation of Providence, to give ability to worſhip God acceptably, and to exerciſe juſtice, mercy, and goodneſs to all men, and even to the lower animals, according to their nature. But the ſimplicity and purity of this univerſal religion, which, by the oldeſt writer extant, is emphatically called, "Walking with God," has indeed been ſadly defaced by the addition of various rites, ceremonies, and ſuperſtitious practices; which human reaſon and policy have introduced among different people, in the ſeveral ages of the world. Yet I believe, it is the influence of this univerſal principle of religion, rather than the concluſions of reaſon, which has preſerved among all people, even the moſt ſavage, ſome conception of the

the exiſtence, power, wiſdom, and goodneſs, of the Creator; of his providence over all his works; of right and wrong in thought, words, and actions; and of their being accountable for the ſame in a life to come, after this is finiſhed, where good men will be happy, and the wicked miſerable. And if the manifeſtation of this religious principle appears to be leſs in degree or clearneſs among ſome people, than among others; it may be preſumed, that where little is given, little is required, and that obedience to that little will be accepted. Obedience to the dictates of this pure religion is recompenſed with the peace and approbation of God ſpoken in the heart in this life; and a comfortable hope of happineſs in the next: but diſobedience is attended with a painful ſenſe of his diſapprobation here, and a fear of puniſhment hereafter.

VII. *Of the State, Employments, Feelings, and Society, of Disembodied Souls, as deducible from the universal principle of Religion.*

It is now time to inquire what concluſions concerning the ſtate of departed ſouls in the next life, may be ſafely drawn from the conſideration of univerſal principles of religion.

Of its mode of Existence.

Various are the external forms and beliefs, annexed to the different religions, eſtabliſhed in different nations and ages: and they all explain their ſeveral notions of the feelings and employments of diſembodied ſouls, and of their happy or miſerable ſtate in the next life, by terms taken from things of this world; from which

which they are, doubtleſs, very different. Yet, notwithſtanding the diverſity of their notions, they all agree in this one point; that men will be happy or miſerable in the future life, according to the good or bad deeds they have done in this. This agreement of all people ariſes from the univerſality of the gift of the true principle of religion to all the children of men: and ſince very little more of the manner of the exiſtence of diſembodied ſouls is diſcovered to the moſt enlightened people, than to the more ignorant; it may be concluded, that a more preciſe knowledge of it is unneceſſary to any uſeful purpoſe, and probably inconceivable by man, while living on earth.

Nevertheleſs, ſince univerſal religion teaches that the future life will be a ſtate of reward, or puniſhment, for deeds done in this; it follows, that the ſoul, after its ſeparation from the body, will ſtill be conſcious of its own identity, and

and know itſelf to be the ſelf ſame ſoul, which animated ſuch a body on earth, and in it did ſuch and ſuch deeds; that it will remember and recognize theſe deeds, both the good and the bad; will retain the ſenſibility of its nature, and ſtand naked before the Creator: conſequently it will retain and exerciſe its eſſential powers of perception, feeling, memory, underſtanding, affection, and volition; though we are altogether ignorant of the manner how, and of the objects about which, theſe powers will be employed.

Of its Employments and Feelings.

The neareſt reſemblance of the employment and enjoyments of happy ſouls in heaven is, I believe, that which good men experience here at times, when they are favoured in prayer, or meditation; when they are enabled to worſhip God, and

and do his will, acceptably; and when his peace, ſpoken in the heart, gives them a taſte and foreſight of the heavenly joys and glory of a happy life to come. And the accuſations of an awakened conſcience, ſometimes cauſe the wicked to feel a foretaſte of the miſery, which awaits them in the next life for their evil deeds, without repentance: yet this ſtate of mind is far better, and more hopeful than a hardneſs of heart, which is inſenſible either of good, or of bad.

Of its Society.

Since we ſhall be conſcious in the next life, who ourſelves were while living on earth, many virtuous men have been of the opinion, that we ſhall then be able to know, and converſe with our dear relations and friends, who have departed this life

life before us, or ſhall come after us. But it ſeems as probable, that all the ties of human love and friendſhip will terminate at death; and that, in the ſtate of happineſs, the principal bond of union will be the pure love of God.

THE CONCLUSION.

We may now ſee, how little we know of the mode of the future ſtate; yet this little knowledge is, doubtleſs, ſufficient for every uſeful purpoſe of human life. And to compare great things with ſmall, we may alſo obſerve, that every kind of the lower animals ſeems to be endued with the kind and degree of knowledge, which is required for the proper management of its own affairs; that a greater degree than this is equally denied to all, as uſeleſs, and perhaps hurtful; and that all appear contented with their portion. Shall man,

who

who has received an underſtanding, incomparably more comprehenſive, than the moſt ſagacious brute, be alone diſcontented; and want to extend his knowledge beyond the powers of his faculties, vaſt as they are? The attempt is vain; and can only lead into the dark and inextricable mazes of metaphyſical uncertainty.

THE END.